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President Curran Will Join Campaign to Ban Torture

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University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran will become the first president of a U.S. Catholic university to sign a national petition calling for the president to reject cruelty and torture.

"As a Catholic, Marianist university, we affirm the statement of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that the use of torture must be rejected as fundamentally incompatible with the dignity of the human person and ultimately counterproductive in combatting terrorism," Curran said.

The petition is the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prisoner Treatment from the Center for the Victims of Torture. The center is mounting a nationwide effort as part of its "Campaign to Ban Torture: American Voices for American Values."

Curran and Cincinnati Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk will sign the petition when the University hosts an "American Voices for American Values" event 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Oct. 13, in the Kennedy Union ballroom on the UD campus.

Four former high-ranking CIA, defense department and military officials — Peter Mansoor, Carl Ford, William H. Taft IV and Donald Gregg — also will participate in the event. They will explain why they believe the president should issue a presidential executive order that unequivocally rejects torture and cruelty to prisoners.

Ford was a U.S. assistant secretary of state and Taft was a legal advisor to the U.S. State Department under President George W. Bush. Gregg was a national security advisor under Vice President George H.W. Bush. Mansoor was a key advisor to Gen. David Petraeus, who served as commander of the multinational forces in the Iraq, and actively involved in the development of the "surge strategy."

Mansoor, Taft, Ford and Gregg have signed the declaration, which encourages whoever is in the Oval Office to abide by the "golden rule," the rule of law and the duty to protect all prisoners from abuse. The declaration also stresses that the president should adhere to Constitutional checks and balances and should give all U.S. personnel the certainty the policies they implement are legal.

Three former U.S. secretaries of state, three former U.S. secretaries of defense and four World War II interrogators have signed the declaration as well, among more than 200 others.

The University of Dayton human rights studies program is hosting the event in partnership with the Minneapolis-based Center for the Victims of Torture. The center, along with Evangelicals for Human Rights and the National Religious Campaign against Torture, is building bipartisan support for the declaration around the country to preserve America's ideals and regain U.S. moral leadership in the world. The center has enlisted Mark Ensalaco, director of UD's human rights studies program, to promote the declaration in Ohio.

"This will be an open public debate about a controversial subject," Ensalaco said. "A week after the 9/11 attacks, the president asked us all to 'uphold the values of America...we are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them.' We organized this event to ask the public to reflect on that responsibility."

Douglas A. Johnson, executive director of the Center for the Victims of Torture, appreciates UD's efforts to promote the declaration.

"The efforts of the University of Dayton and Professor Ensalaco, in particular, to promote a presidential ban on torture illustrates the broad-based support that we're building in communities across the country," Johnson said. "The event in Dayton is part of a nationwide campaign urging presidential leadership on an issue that demands immediate action. We are grateful for Professor Ensalaco's leadership in helping promote the declaration."

Under Ensalaco's direction, UD created the nation's first undergraduate program in human rights studies in 1999. Since then, he has developed the program into the nation's first bachelor's program in human rights studies. UD's human rights studies program is within the department of political science. It's an interdisciplinary program that has faculty and classes from

communication, philosophy, economics, criminal justice studies and anthropology as part of its curriculum.

In anticipation of the bachelor's program starting this school year, Ensalaco has been tirelessly laying the groundwork to involve UD's human rights program in the network that promotes human dignity.

In February, Ensalaco became a member of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities peace and social justice advisory committee, which is expected to endorse the declaration. This summer, he attended the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops National Migration Conference, was part of an Ohio delegation representing Catholic Charities under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and he lobbied Ohio's U.S. senators Sherrod Brown and George Voinovich about the Trafficking Victims Protection Renewal Act.

Ensalaco's human rights work issues dates back 20 years. In 1988, he was awarded a Fulbright-Hays fellowship to conduct doctoral research at the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota, Colombia. Since 1991, he has been engaged in the pursuit of justice for Chile's disappeared under Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. He wrote *Chile under Pinochet: Recovering the Truth* that examined Pinochet's dictatorship and early efforts to recover the truth about Pinochet's human rights violations. Ensalaco currently is working on a sequel, *The Mark of Cain: The Prosecution of Pinochet and the Search for the Disappeared*. The book is a behind-the-scenes account of the investigation, impeachment and indictment of Pinochet.

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